

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 SAJ-01 ACDA-05 CIAE-00 PM-03

H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01

OMB-01 AID-05 SCCT-01 AF-06 IO-10 /099 W

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P R 031238Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2682

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LISBON 2518

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, PO

SUBJ: NO VIOLENCE AT SOCIALIST PROTEST RALLY

REFS: A. LISBON 2510; B. LISBON 2399

1. IN RESPONSE TO EXCLUSION OF SOCIALIST LEADER MARIO SOARES FROM MAY DAY RALLY SPEAKERS STAND (REFTEL A), SOCIALIST RANK AND FILE DEMANDED AND GOT A PROTEST RALLY ORGANIZED ON EVENING OF MAY 2. DESPITE LAST MINUTE ARRANGEMENTS AND WITH NO HELP FROM THE RADIO, SOCIALISTS RALLIED ABOUT 50,000 DEMONSTRATORS IN DOWNTOWN LISBON (ABOUT 10,000 SOCIALISTS MARCHED IN OPORTO).

2. A LARGE CONTINGENT FROM COPCON WAS ON THE LISBON SCENE. FEARS OF VIOLENCE WENT UNREALIZED, HOWEVER, AS THE CROWD MARCHED PEACEFULLY THROUGH DOWNTOWN LISBON AND BROKE UP AFTER REACHING
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PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AT SAO BENTO.

3. SOARES HAD ATTEMPTED TO DOWNPLAY THE MAY 1 AFFAIR. THE FIRST PARTY COMMUNIQUE ON THE SUBJECT ISSUED EARLY IN THE MORNING OF MAY 2 WAS RATHER MILD. HOWEVER, AN OUTRAGED RANK AND FILE DEMANDED AND GOT PUBLICATION OF A STRONGER COMMUNIQUE LATER IN THE DAY. SOARES WANTED TO AVOID A PROTEST RALLY BUT WAS FORCED INTO IT BY THE RANK AND FILE.

4. COMMENT: THE CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNIST-LINING INTERSINDICAL IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THE STRAINS ON THE INITIAL PS POLICY OF TREATING THEIR MAJOR ELECTION VICTORY OVER THE COMMUNISTS IN LOW-KEY FASHION AND LETTING THE NEW POLITICAL DYNAMIC WORK ITSELF OUT WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT (REFTEL B) RATHER THAN IN PUBLIC CONFRONTATIONS WITH THE PCP.

5. WITH MAY DAY COMING ONLY SIX DAYS AFTER SOCIALIST'S ELECTION TRIUMPH, EARLY CONFRONTATION WAS, IN PART, FORTUITOUS. BUT IT IS PROBABLY A HARBINGER OF THINGS TO COME: COMMUNISTS, STUNG BY ELECTION SETBACK, ARE INCREASINGLY AGGRESSIVE (PCP-DOMINATED TYPESETTERS UNION, FOR EXAMPLE, REFUSED TO PRINT SOCIALIST PAPER "REPUBLICA" LAST NIGHT); SOCIALISTS, ESPECIALLY RANK AND FILE, ARE EAGER TO COME OUT SWINGING. OUTLOOK IS THUS FOR TROUBLE -- POSSIBLY STREET VIOLENCE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS, SOCIALISM, POLITICAL PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LISBON02518
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750156-0262
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750583/aaaacxve.tel
Line Count: 85
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 LISBON 2510, 75 LISBON 2399
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 MAY 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <20 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NO VIOLENCE AT SOCIALIST PROTEST RALLY
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, PO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006